

## **How Has the City of Falls Church Helped Hurricane Victims in Louisiana?**

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast as a Category 3 hurricane. With damages totaling \$75 Billion and 1,605 fatalities, it is considered one of the most devastating hurricanes in Gulf Coast history.

St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, sustained catastrophic destruction, with storm damage affecting virtually *every* structure. A 25-foot storm surge destroyed the Parish's levees and left 5 to 12 feet of standing water in its wake. All of its schools endured substantial damage, and it took more than two months to restore basic services like electricity and water.

It is the first time in FEMA history that an entire parish or county experienced the severity of damage that St. Bernard received from Katrina. For this reason, the City of Falls Church chose St. Bernard Parish to be the primary recipient of its relief efforts. Below is a timeline of the activities that the City has undertaken to assist in the rebuilding and recovery:

- *September 12, 2005:* the City Council commissions a Task Force for a one-year duration to coordinate efforts in providing assistance to the communities affected. City Council also authorizes a donation of \$10,000 to the American Red Cross.
- *September 17, 2005:* More than \$500 is collected by the American Red Cross at the City's Fall Festival, and the Benevolent Association collects more than \$700 for families of law enforcement personnel.
- *September/October 2005:* Bake Sales at Thomas Jefferson and Mount Daniel Elementary Schools raise more than \$600 for the American Red Cross.
- *September/October 2005:* A six-week Personal Hygiene Product Drive concludes, with more than 6,000 pounds of donated items such as shampoo, soap and deodorant collected for evacuees temporarily housed at the Armory in Washington, D.C. and evacuees in West Baton Rouge Parish.
- *October 24, 2005:* After receiving approval from the School Board, four of the six donated surplus classroom trailers depart the City for their destination of West Baton Rouge. The remaining two trailers depart in early November. The total value of the donation is \$129,000.
- *November 2, 2005:* Project Backpack, a collection drive for school supplies and reading materials, concludes with more than 420 filled

backpacks being shipped to St. Bernard Parish to help the evacuated school children prepare to resume schooling.

- *December 16, 2005:* Holiday Hope, a fundraising drive to collect gift cards, concludes. 90+ gift cards valued at more than \$1,800 were donated to White Castle High School, Dorseyville Elementary School and St. Bernard Parish, bringing much-needed holiday joy to evacuee children and their families.
- *February 2006:* The City's Mardi Gras-themed Restaurant Week raises more than \$2,200 for CrossLink International, Homestretch and St. Bernard Parish with nine local restaurants participating.
- *March 2006:* The Mary Riley Styles Public Library donates the proceeds of its book sale to St. Bernard Parish Public Schools. More than \$4,000 is raised, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor who agreed to match book sale profits dollar-for-dollar.
- *April 2006:* George Mason High School's Athletic Booster Club donates \$1,000 to the St. Bernard Parish Athletic Department for the purchase of equipment and uniforms.
- *May 2006:* Thomas Jefferson Elementary School Spring Fling donates \$300 to the St. Bernard Parish fund.

**Other Task Force Member Activities of Note:**

- \$500 to the Chalmette High School Marching Band for new instruments
- \$10,000 raised for the Tipitina's Foundation Artist Relief Fund for St. Bernard Parish's school music program
- Volunteer involvement for Habitat for Humanity's Build on the Mall event
- Volunteer trips to Louisiana to assist in clean-up and rebuilding
- City Arborist participation in the Gulf Coast Tree Assessment project

**DONATION TOTALS**

<b>Value:</b>	<b>\$152,000</b>
<b>Personal Hygiene Products:</b>	<b>6,100 Pounds</b>
<b>Backpacks:</b>	<b>421, Filled</b>